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ABSTRACT

Interview questions asked of bilingual personnel, building principals, and regular classroom teachers regarding the effectiveness of the program are listed, and their responses are discussed. Topics addressed include student selection and eligibility requirements, bilingual teacher aide and social worker helpfulness, teacher cooperation, inservice program usefulness, instructional materials, parent participation, and recommendations for program improvement. Additional observations are outlined and specific strategies for improving the effectiveness of the program are recommended. A summary concludes that the program has been successful and should be continued. (EB)

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Buffalo Public Schools Spanish-English Program Evaluation 1976-1977

by

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Buffalo Public Schools Spanish-English
Program Evaluation 1976-1977

The discussion of the Spanish-English Program Evaluation is organized around a set of questions taken from the description of various program objectives and procedures as stated in the Title I proposal. These questions are designed to serve the purpose in the Provus Discrepancy Model of validating whether or not the guidelines, as stated in the proposal, are being met.

In all cases, as many of the personnel in the program as possible were interviewed. In addition to the bilingual personnel, building principals, and some regular classroom teachers were also interviewed in order to determine the impact of the program. Additionally responses to some questions were derived from classroom observation.

Following the discussion of the questions, a section on Observations and Recommendations and a Summary section is included.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF BILINGUAL PERSONNEL

1a. How did you select the students in your program?

1b. When children were eligible for both the Title #1 Reading and Math program and the Bilingual program, who determined in which program they were to be enrolled?

2. How many students are presently receiving bilingual services?

3. How frequently do you meet with your students?

4. On what basis do you develop the instructional program for your students?

5. In what ways do you and the classroom teachers cooperatively work together?

6. Do you have regularly scheduled times when you confer with the classroom teacher?

7. How helpful and knowledgeable are the aides in your program?

8. How helpful has the bilingual social worker been?

9. How useful have the inservice programs been? What recommendations would you make for future inservice programs?

10. How adequate are your supplies and materials?

11. How active is your PAC?

12. What have you done to encourage parental involvement?

13. What recommendations would you make for your role specifically and the program in general?

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED OF BILINGUAL PERSONNEL

1a. How did you select the students in your program?

In all cases, students were first selected on the basis of MAT scores. After this initial selection, all children who had Spanish surnames were given one or more diagnostic tests to determine fluency with the language. Based upon these scores, children were either screened in or out of the program.

1b. When children are eligible for both the Title I Reading and Math program and the Bilingual program, who determined in which program they were to be enrolled?

This appears to have been most generally done by the Bilingual Teacher. In some cases these decisions were unilaterally made without consultation with the Title I Reading or Cluster teacher. In general, the rule which appears to be the most widely used is that the child has a Spanish surname. This is one area that needs to be strengthened. It would seem crucial that diagnosis be accurate enough to determine whether a child's problem in reading is due to a language problem or due to a specific reading handicap.

2. How many students do you presently service?

The number of students serviced varied from 15-60.

3. How frequently do you meet with your students?

The students were generally met each day. The time periods did, however, vary. This variation was primarily caused by the severity of the language problem for some children. In a few

cases where children were completely non-English speakers, up to one-half of the school day was spent in the bilingual rooms. In the case of non-English speaking children, the bilingual teachers had a tremendous responsibility in trying to keep the children up with their regular academic work and at the same time try to teach them the language.

4. On what basis do you develop your instructional program?

The intent of this question was to determine the extent of diagnostic-prescriptive teaching procedures. It was found that in general, the teachers based their decisions upon the language fluency tests given. Consequently, the instructional program appeared to be primarily language development rather than specifically reading and math instruction. This maybe due to the fact that few of the bilingual teachers had a specific reading background. This is not to say that I did not see reading activities occurring. In fact, I did see some excellent teaching, however, I did not get the sense that most of the teachers had a good handle on the reading process. This could probably be remedied by having someone trained in reading with specific knowledge of the reading tasks related to bilingual speakers on staff.

5. In what ways do you and the classroom teachers cooperatively work together?

The general procedure used by most bilingual teachers to cooperatively work with the classroom teacher is simply

to schedule a time weekly in which to discuss the general progress of the child. These discussions range from the identification of support activities the classroom teacher can provide to a discussion of exactly what material is being taught in the classroom. The latter has been quite helpful because in many instances children with limited English language facility fall behind in their academic subjects and in this way the bilingual teachers have been able to provide excellent support to the classroom teacher and to the child.

The comments that I received from the regular classroom teachers were very positive regarding the cooperation they have experienced with the bilingual teachers and conversely the bilingual teachers also seemed quite satisfied.

6. Do you have regularly scheduled times when you confer with the classroom teacher?

(See discussion of question five.)

7. How helpful and knowledgeable are the aides in your program?

In most cases the teachers perceived the aides to be very helpful and quite knowledgeable. In only one classroom did the teacher express dissatisfaction with the aide. It was recommended, however, that periodic orientations and training sessions be provided for the aides.

8. How helpful has the bilingual social worker been?

In all cases, the work of the social worker was valued

very highly. The major problem, however, is that additional personnel is needed. For example, when the social worker has to take a family to an agency, because of the inability of many families to speak English well, the social worker can not simply drop the family off, instead she must stay and translate for them.

The social worker plays an important part in implementing program goals. He/she is the liason between the program and the community and in doing so can encourage support for the program and participation in the program by the parents. At least two additional social workers need to be added.

9. How useful have the inservice programs been? What recommendations would you make for future inservice programs?

In general, most of the personnel felt that the inservice programs were extremely valuable and that they obtained much information from them. Several people, however, recommended that inservices that were more specific to their individual needs regardings subject area and grade level be incuded. Most seem to feel the need for more in-depth work in the area of reading, and those people working in junior high schools requested that area meetings, regarding specific subject disciplines, would be extremely helpful.

Another recommendation was that meetings be provided for simple exchange of information. This sharing of ideas could strengthen the program. In this way the teachers begin to see and use themselves as their own resources.

10. How adequate are your supplies and materials?

The variation in supplies and materials from school to school was amazing. Some schools are extremely well stocked and have provided excellent facilities for the students. In other schools, few supplies existed and the facility itself was inadequate. Additional supplies need to be purchased for those rooms which are inadequately equipped. Secondly, the administration should be encouraged to provide suitable classroom space.

11. How active is the PAC?

In all cases, the PAC was not described as being very active.

12. What have you done to encourage parental involvement?

In evaluating these responses, I would basically have to say that little direct effort is being made to involve parents. In all cases, the teachers indicated that parents were welcome to come into the classroom at any time, however, this appears to be an extremely ineffective method. This ineffectuality can be contributed in some cases to the lack of facility of the language of many of the people. Another contribution, however, maybe cultural in that the school for many Spanish speaking people is not a place where you involve yourself. These problems could be lessened by trained community aides. These aides could encourage parents to become participants in the educational process of their child-

ren, and demonstrate that the school becomes more effective, not less effective, with their contributions.

13. What recommendations would you make for your role specifically and the program in general?

1. Most would like (as discussed in question 9) inservices to be more specific. That is, those people who work with Junior High School level children would prefer inservices which would relate specifically to the content that is taught at that level and the problems and development of the adolescent. Others would like more specific work with methods and materials for teaching reading, for example, to the bilingual primary school child.

2. Another recommendation was to increase the number of Bilingual social workes in the program. (See question 8.)

3. More materials and supplies are needed for several of the schools. Additionally, better facilities need to be provided in some cases. (See question 10.)

4. Increased numbers of inservice programs for aides need to be provided.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Clearly the inservice programs are presently highly valued, but more need to be included. The additional ones should be more topical and age related. This means that additional inservices need to be developed which will not include the total staff but will relate to the need of staff in specific areas.

2. Presently some schools are considerably better stocked than others, consequently, the impact of the program is less strong in some schools. It would be recommended that the existing materials be more evenly distributed and that additional materials be purchased.

3. The comments from most of the staff indicate a high approval of the program. Most appeared to be well trained and very conscientious. In some cases, excellent teaching was observed.

4. The evaluation procedure could be immensely improved if it occurred earlier in the year to facilitate the observation of classroom instruction. Occurring when it did this year, many of the classes were no longer having instruction or children were on field trips.

5. A more clearly defined procedure for selecting pupils needs to be established. Some teachers are apparently making selections on the basis of Spanish surname and stanine only. It needs to be more clearly determined whether students learning problems are directly related to their Spanish speaking background or if they simply have reading difficulties and would benefit more by having in s truction in the regular Title I classroom.

SUMMARY

The program as it presently exist should definitely be continued, hopefully taking into consideration the recommendations that have been made in the previous sections. Additionally if funds become available the program should be increased, specifically an additional social worker should be added immediately and additional materials should be purchased and more inservice meetings need to be provided.

Schools Visited

P.S. 76	May 30 p.m.
36	June 7 a.m.
3	June 7 p.m.
77	June 8 a.m.
4	June 8 p.m.
6	June 9 a.m.